Current affairs

1 **Choose the correct preposition to complete the sentences.**

1. The campaign is not making an impact *in / on / to* voters.
2. The government is unlikely to give in to the calls *for / of / on* a referendum.
3. Thousands of workers took part in a protest *against / to / with* pay cuts.
4. The press showed no regard *at / for / on* his privacy.
5. The campaigners received little support *for / on / towards* their proposals.
6. The company has reported a record-breaking increase *in / of / up* sales.
7. Has the committee considered the consequences *for / of / on* the changes on members?
8. Several players have expressed their desire *for / of / to* leave the club next season.

2 **Complete the sentences with the correct words from the boxes.**

cases	examples	incidents	occasions

1. The company was accused of unfair use of personal data on a number of ..... .
2. Serious ..... of passenger misbehaviour include refusing to fasten their seatbelts and trying to open the plane door mid-flight.
3. As many as a hundred people are thought to have been injured, in some ..... , seriously.
4. Obvious ..... of internet crimes are hacking, spreading viruses and piracy.

enquiry	investigation	research	survey

5. The cause of the fire is currently under ..... .
6. University scientists are carrying out ..... into the side-effects of these drugs.
7. The authorities are conducting a ..... of residents' thoughts on the proposed changes.
8. The government has ordered a public ..... to determine the reasons for the unrest.

attention	attraction	interest	focus

9. At the core of the city is its castle, which is the main tourist ..... .
10. The press has now turned its ..... to other matters.
11. The media ..... on politicians' private lives means that many of the real, important issues are not dealt with.
12. Readers have lost ..... in the story.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

3 **For questions 1–8, read the text below and decide which answer (A, B, C or D) best fits each gap. There is an example at the beginning. (0)**

Example:

0 **A** growing **B** evolving **C** moving **D** rising

Example answer: *B*



News sharing

The way we obtain our news coverage is always **(0)** ..... . The public can gain information on current events from a wide variety of **(1)** ..... . Centuries ago, news was obtained either by word of mouth, with town criers **(2)** ..... citizens of news and by-laws, or from print, with notices posted on doors of the local inn. With the **(3)** ..... of radio, whole families could **(4)** ..... together in the living room to listen to the daily news bulletin. Even today, when TV sets occupy a prime **(5)** ..... in the most used rooms in our house, some listeners remain faithful to their radio stations. Except, of course, for the fact that many will **(6)** ..... in to them on their computer or tablet instead of turning their radio dial.
With the **(7)** ..... use of social media, news travels faster than ever before. Minute-by-minute coverage of the news no longer relies on TV networks. Increased internet access enables individuals to share photos, opinions and even live videos with one sharp **(8)** ..... on the screen.

1	**A** opportunities	**B** causes	**C** ways	**D** sources
2	**A** explaining	**B** informing	**C** noting	**D** communicating
3	**A** arrival	**B** entrance	**C** starting	**D** approach
4	**A** team	**B** gang	**C** gather	**D** unite
5	**A** area	**B** site	**C** position	**D** point
6	**A** turn	**B** switch	**C** tune	**D** start
7	**A** sweeping	**B** absolute	**C** large	**D** widespread
8	**A** stroke	**B** tap	**C** squeeze	**D** nudge

LIVEWORKSHEETS

THE INDEPENDENT

The Financial Crisis: Now the real problems begin

The economic downturn is really starting to bite in households up and down Britain. Sunday, 19 October 2008

1 You've read about the worldwide economic crisis and its complex elements. You've anxiously clicked on to websites for updates, and watched economic reports on the television screen. Now it's going to start coming a lot closer to home - maybe even your own. Here is how the different sectors of Britain's economy are being affected.

2 Jobs

Unemployment is at its highest level for nearly a decade, with a thousand people losing their jobs every day. By Christmas the number without jobs is expected to top two million. David Kuo, financial expert at the money website Fool.co.uk, said: "Job losses are unavoidable because the economy is shrinking. By next year it is likely to reach three million, which will mean one in 12 people out of work."

3 Pay

Despite last month's inflation rate being the highest for 16 years at 5.3 per cent, the average pay rise this year was 3.4 per cent, the lowest for five years. Mick McAteer of the Financial Inclusion Centre said: "Although inflation is higher than expected, it's difficult to see wages reflecting that. Employees in the private sector will find it hard to be in a strong bargaining position because of the expected rise in unemployment."

4 Mortgages

Only 15,600 first-time mortgages were approved in August, down 55 per cent from last year, according to the Council of Mortgage Lenders (CML). For those without a deposit of 10 per cent or more it is nearly impossible. Ray Boulger of John Charcol mortgage brokers said: "People won't be able to find a mortgage of more than 90 per cent now, and as long as property values keep falling that will stay the same."

5 Homes

Houses are selling at an average of 9 per cent below asking price, according to the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, and the volume of sales earlier this year was virtually half that of a year ago. But some estate agents are confident the market will have shown signs of recovery by early next year. "We're certainly at the beginning of the end of the freefall in house prices," said Chris Wood, National Association of Estate Agents

6 Shopping

Latest figures from the British Retail Consortium (BRC) show sales falling more sharply than at any other time in the past five months. The organisation predicts retail conditions will remain tough until well into next year at least. A BRC spokesman said: "Customers are short of spare cash and reluctant to spend what money they have got, and those conditions show no signs of changing in the near future."

7 Savings and investments

Falls in stocks and shares hit savings and investments hard. The market will remain volatile until Christmas, say analysts, and is unlikely to start recovering until early next year. "We are at a level now where people will be able to make respectable gains over the long term, although it will be painful in the short term," said Gavin Aldon of the Share Centre. "In the immediate future we will see a substantial fall in interest rates."

8 Taxes

As fewer people buy houses and unemployment continues to rise, the Government will be getting less money from taxes. And it will have to recoup the £50bn spent on the bailout from somewhere."

9 Pensions

Britain's biggest pension schemes lost £45bn in value since the summer. Experts warn that recovery will not happen overnight. "There are two important things to grasp about the impact on pensions," said Nigel Peaple of the National Association of Pension Funds. "First, if you are already drawing your pension you will be unaffected by the market falls. Second, pension funds are all about long-term investing."

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Future prediction and speculation

Various structures and verb forms are used in English to speculate about and predict the future. Look at the following sentences and structures from the text and match them to the correct category below.

1. By Christmas the number without jobs is expected to top two million.
2. By next year it is likely to reach three million
3. The organisation predicts retail conditions will remain tough until well into next year at least.
4. The market will remain volatile until Christmas
5. But eventually these prices are going to go back up again.
6. ... as long as property values keep falling, that will stay the same.

a. 1st conditional (*if/unless/as long as etc.* + present, *will/could* + infinitive)
b. prediction verb (e.g. *warn, forecast, etc.*) + (that) + subject + *will/could* + infinitive
c. *be going to* + infinitive
d. *be* + *expected to* + infinitive
e. *be* + *likely/unlikely to* + infinitive
f. *will* + infinitive

Complete the sentences below with a suitable word or structure from this exercise:

1. As long as housing prices continue to fall, it _____ become more difficult for us to sell our property for the asking price.
2. Experts _____ that next year _____ be a difficult year.
3. China _____ to continue its strong economic growth. It _____ overtaken the USA by 2017.
4. The country's standard of living _____ to improve as its economy grows.
5. Next month, Andrew _____ to start looking for a new job. However, because of his lack of experience he _____ to be offered a very high salary.
6. "What do you think you _____ doing in ten years' time?" "Hopefully, I _____ living somewhere hot and sunny."
7. The construction of the new shopping and entertainment complex _____ to start by the end of next year. It _____ to create many new jobs.
8. Scientists _____ that global warming _____ become a very serious problem in forty years' time.
9. By this time next year, Jack _____ completed his studies. He _____ to achieve a very impressive result.

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